

C/AG

1 April 1976

Thursday

1. (Bietz) ASIAN ASSOCIATION FORUM MEETING: I attended the annual meeting of the Association of Asian Studies in Toronto, Canada, 13-21 March 1976. At the meeting I had an opportunity to renew my contacts with members of the academic community, including subscribers to the China DAILY REPORT, the declassified TRENDS IN COMMUNIST MEDIA, and JPRS products.

I was somewhat surprised at how well-known FBIS has become throughout the academic community, an apparent spinoff of the increased availability of FBIS publications to the general public which has taken place during recent years. I encountered a certain amount of basic ignorance, however, regarding FBIS selection and editorial methods. Steven Anders of Columbia University, for example, noted in the course of giving his paper on mass criticism campaigns in China that the PRC DAILY REPORT was virtually the only source available for information on basic-level production units. He also noted that the DAILY REPORT was nearly the only way to gain any understanding of the "daily life cycle" of the Chinese people--his primary research interest. During an informal chat with Anders after the session was over, he expressed his concern that the DAILY REPORT might not be an accurate and comprehensive sampling of Chinese materials. I was able to answer, I hope, a few of his questions and doubts regarding procedures for selection and publication PRC broadcast items. For example, I assured him that FBIS was selecting and publishing all materials which reflected any key change in the way basic production units functioned--or on any other major issue--and that FBIS was not--as he feared--"holding back" on radio reports which might reflect Chinese daily life in a more positive way.

I was also able to explain FBIS selection methods and processing procedures to Bob Scalapino, of the University of California-Berkeley, who is a regular reader of FBIS publications--in fact I encountered him in a corner reading the PRC DAILY REPORT. He also gets the declassified TRENDS, which he referred to as "holding up" well over time. When he learned of the size of AG's staff he expressed surprise, saying that he had thought it was much larger. After a lengthy conversation with Scalapino on the current anti-Teng Hsiao-ping campaign in China, he asked me about the role that Analysis Group plays in the selection and processing of PRC broadcasts.

Although FBIS is becoming a recognized name in academic circles, many academics appear to have some misconceptions about the various publications, e.g. Anders' question as to whether he can completely "trust" it. It would seem, therefore, that FBIS should be well represented at the annual academic gatherings since they often represent the largest single coming together of the non-governmental consumers of FBIS publications.

(cc: D/ASIS(2), C/AFB, C/AG, C/DAB, C/FRM, LHM)

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